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Showroom shopping – online prices

ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The dynamic team at Montreal Lighting and Hardware invites the consumer to rethink lighting.

In its expansive 15,000-square-foot showroom conveniently located on Paré Street just west of Decarie Boulevard, the brother and sister team of Andrée and Freddie Naimer offer high quality, fashion forward lighting, cabinet hardware, furniture and accessories at the most competitive prices in the Canadian marketplace.

"We have created a local lighting experience for the digital shopper," says Freddie. "The result is a fully appointed showroom highlighting our collections with online pricing."

The concept is simple – there are no secrets. Each hang-tag on items in the store boasts the QR code ensuring transparency for the consumer. "There are no secrets anymore," says Freddie.

He says they sought out a business model and showroom concept that would represent the next shift in retail. The buying habits of the consumer were changing and many were moving to online purchasing.

After many years in the lighting business, almost a century between them, they felt the time was right to move forward with their new concept.

"We knew what we did right and what we were not doing to meet the needs of the consumer and now we decided we were going to do it right," says Freddie.

The Naimers were fortunate to develop a relationship with a similar company in the United States and launch Montreal Lighting and Hardware as the first of its kind in the Canadian marketplace. "They helped us create both the showroom and our website," says Freddie.

The overriding concept makes sense to the consumer and is expressed in the store's tag line – showroom shopping, online pricing. "Our customers want Internet selection and pricing while buying something they want from someone they can trust," says Freddie.

All prices, whether on the company website or on the showroom floor, are quoted in the final Canadian price with no additional charges. This is very important for the consumer to note, as most Internet pricing does not follow this straightforward model.

What the consumer doesn't always take into account is that prices are quoted before many additional charges such as taxes, duties, brokerage, shipping and exchange are included.

"We wanted the consumer to have the opportunity to make a fair comparison," says Freddie. "Our customers appreciate seeing something on the Internet and [being able] to buy it locally."

Designers and consumers alike feel welcome in the expansive premises. A large coffee bar serves the dual purpose of a workspace for designers to pour over plans, and a spot for customers to ponder their choices over a cappuccino and biscotti.

"We encourage our customers to bring in their architectural or designer's plans and work with our professionals to make the right choices," says Andrée.

The showroom is easy to navigate, divided into many large spaces designed with the homeowner in mind. A sparkling chandelier sits above a dining table, sconces are displayed on painted walls as if in the hallway of a home, and table lamps are placed on end tables and other furniture.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Sculpted metal figurines of men climbing walls form part of the eclectic décor accessories collection showcased at Montreal Lighting and Hardware.

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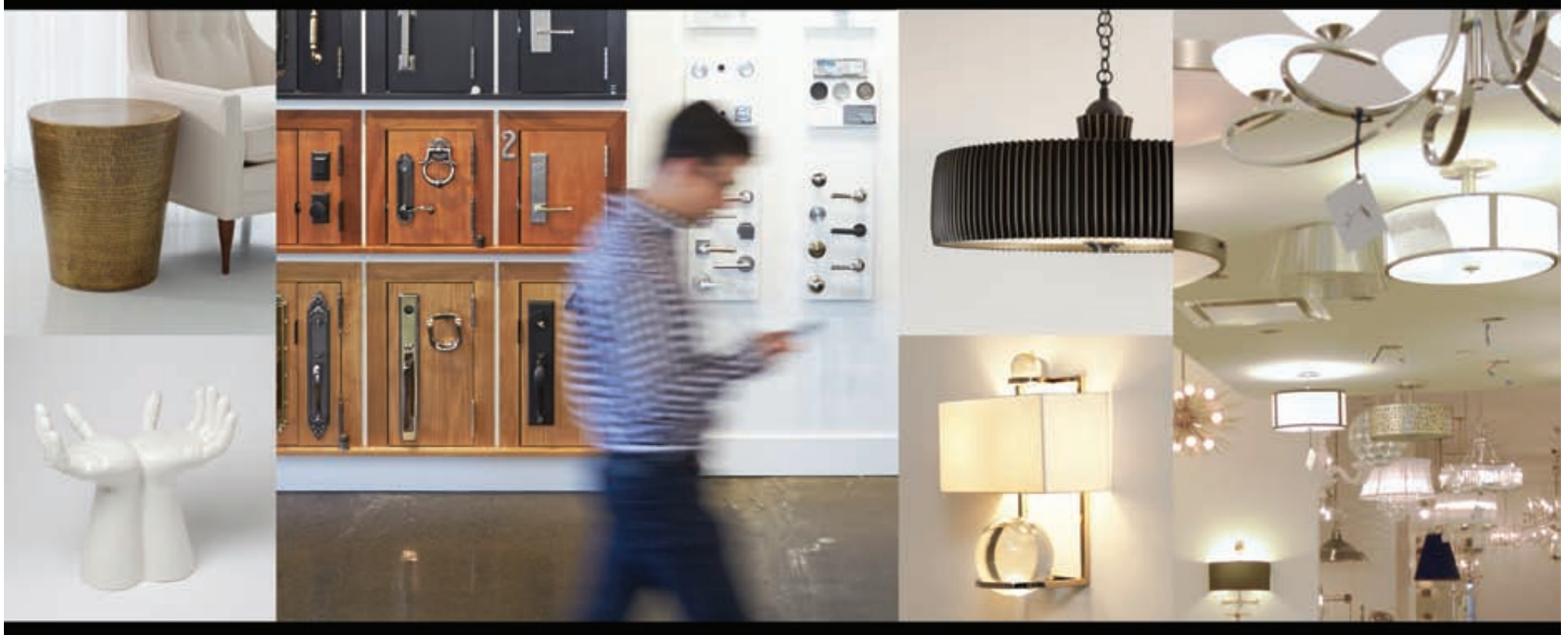

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Almar offers personal service and top-notch appliances

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

Savvy consumers in the market for major household appliances head to Almar, a home appliance emporium at 5400 Decarie Boulevard, with parking on the premises.

A hands-on family enterprise since 1966, Almar carries a vast selection of leading brands of major appliances from Europe and North America. The 55,000-square-foot appliance centre at 5400 Decarie Boulevard is open Monday to Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

An extensive array of ovens, cooktops, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, washing machines, dryers, microwaves, wine coolers, and numerous other products and accessories are on display in the spacious premises. To assure optimum efficiency, Almar operates its own delivery service.

One of Almar's distinctive features is the step-by-step guidance patiently provided by knowledgeable staff. Principals Barry and Steven Adler were weaned on the family enterprise founded by their parents, Michael and June. The business has expanded and diversified over the years, and all four family members contribute daily to the firm's success. Almar consultants Tullio Corvisieri, Erik Ouellete and Nick Buttino are also active members of the team.

Barry credits his father for laying a solid foundation and consistently responding to customers' needs. "When others were just selling white goods, my father foresaw people wanted high-end, innovative items. At Almar, we have always been progressive while respecting everyone's budget. Customers receive top value for their dollar."

Almar carries all the traditional white goods and well-known names, as well as the latest upscale designer name brands.

Almar is an authorized licensed dealer of leading North American and European brands such as AEG, Dacor, Miele, Liebherr and many other renowned trendsetters. Barry Adler took time recently to show some innovative models on display.

"Our personalized service carries through from the moment a customer steps inside and makes a purchase to beyond delivery and installation," he said.

"Our customers are shown what's out there, what suits them and why."

Almar experts consider the size and shape of the room plus placement of the appliance. For some homes, it is just a matter of taste or lifestyle whether customers pick built-in or freestanding units, side or French double refrigerator doors, bottom fridge-freezers or top units.

Dacor's fine wine cooling system
PHOTO COURTESY OF ALMAR APPLIANCES

> *At Almar, we have always been progressive while respecting everyone's budget*

Dacor's refrigeration systems are a boon for gourmet meal planners
ALMAR APPLIANCES PHOTO

However, in other instances, logistics matter and programs make a world of difference. At Almar, consumers will discover powerhouse gas and electric ovens and customized towers equipped with Sabbath timers, auto roast, gentle bake, maxi broil, convection, rotisserie, dehydrated reheat, anti-splash trays, perfect clean coating, or combination steam and hot air technology. The latter method ensures even heat circulation to enhance flavours. A case in point is Dacor's Renaissance 30-in. Double Wall Oven, lauded for performance in recent consumer reviews. The convection fans pull air in rather than blowing it out, thus resulting in piping hot, evenly cooked meals.

Almar showcases refrigerators with ultimate lifestyle appeal. Consumers have the choice of sound-sensitive models that may include many of the following features: LED touch systems, accurate temperature and humidity levels for independent cooling zones, halogen-based interior bright lighting, built-in wine coolers, and multiple compressors so air doesn't mix or leech flavours.

Wine connoisseurs will value Dacor's first automated, temperature controlled four-bottle wine dispensing and preservation systems for the home. They can choose the right amount and taste with a touch of the finger. No need to waste or compromise taste when left with half-used bottles. Stowed in the wine station, the cooler automatically emits argon gas and seals in flavour. ■

For more information on Almar's extensive inventory, phone 514-482-0007 or visit www.almarappliance.com

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Unique furniture offerings at **Avenue Design**

ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A keen sense of style and a commitment to top quality characterizes how Dino Bonomo, the dynamic owner of Avenue Design, runs his business. As he shows clients around the bright, fully appointed showroom of his store, it is clear he loves what he does. With a background in design and extensive experience as a buyer and merchandiser, Bonomo has grown Avenue Design into a one-stop shop for mid- to high-end quality furnishings.

"We are continually evolving and filling a design niche that I felt we were missing in the Montreal marketplace," says Bonomo. "I wanted to offer quality products that will last in both look and durability at a price point that makes sense."

Avenue Design carries furniture for every room in the house, along with a full range of unique accessories including artwork, lighting, mirrors, carpets and a large assortment of accent pillows.

"Our showroom reflects a mix of designs which is not typical in a standard Montreal showroom," says Bonomo. "People are recognizing the high quality, style and variety that we provide."

The Avenue Design collection includes transitional, classic and contemporary offerings. "Our collection includes comfortable furniture to use and enjoy," says Bonomo. "We have some eclectic pieces as well, with the entire collection characterized by a contemporary edge."

The international influences at play are reflected in room vignettes incorporating European, New York, California and Chicago inspired designs.

Guiding the consumer is an in-house design team. "We have a highly qualified group of designers who work one-on-one with each client," says Bonomo. "Working directly with a design team is an added value that will prevent people from making costly mistakes."

There is no charge for consultations as Bonomo is confident that the consumer will go on to do business with Avenue Design. The designer will visit the client's home, take measurements and get a feel for the space. "We will design a complete floor plan," says longtime design team member, Nancy Gray-Greenstone.

Innovative software allows the client to see how a particular item will look when moved into his specific room size. "We suggest the client brings in as much information as possible, such as measurements, fabrics, paint samples, etc., so we can get a good grasp of what the project entails," says Bonomo.

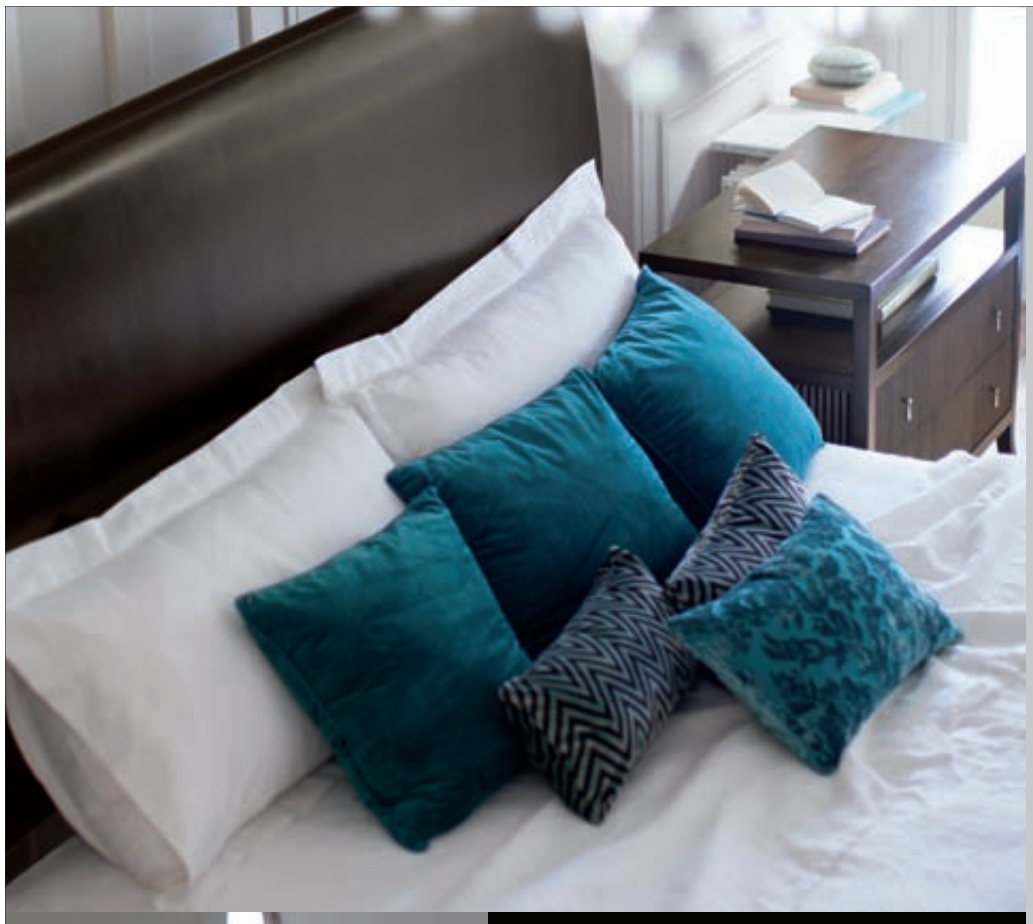
Independent interior designers and decorators enjoy bringing their clients to Avenue Design where the in-house design team stands ready to provide the best choices and best value for their clients.

Top quality, fashion-forward furniture and accessories form the collection at Avenue Design.
AVENUE DESIGN AND ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN PHOTOS

Most pieces can be customized in size, finishes and upholstery choice. Some of the furniture collections available include Bernhardt, Lexington and Van Guard. "Today's buyer is more educated than in the past," says Bonomo. "Clients have access to more information and are taking the time to ensure they are purchasing quality products." A full fabric library includes top-quality collections from Kravet, Robert Allen and Avant Garde, among others.

Bonomo says that today's consumer is looking to create an individual look. "There are no specific trends," says Bonomo. "What we do see is that people are willing to mix old and new, modern and traditional, for a more eclectic, contemporary look. [They are] creating their own signature space that they are very proud of."

Stop by the Avenue Design showroom conveniently located at 3425 Côte Vertu Boulevard in Ville St-Laurent or consult the website at www.avenuedesigncanada.com. ■



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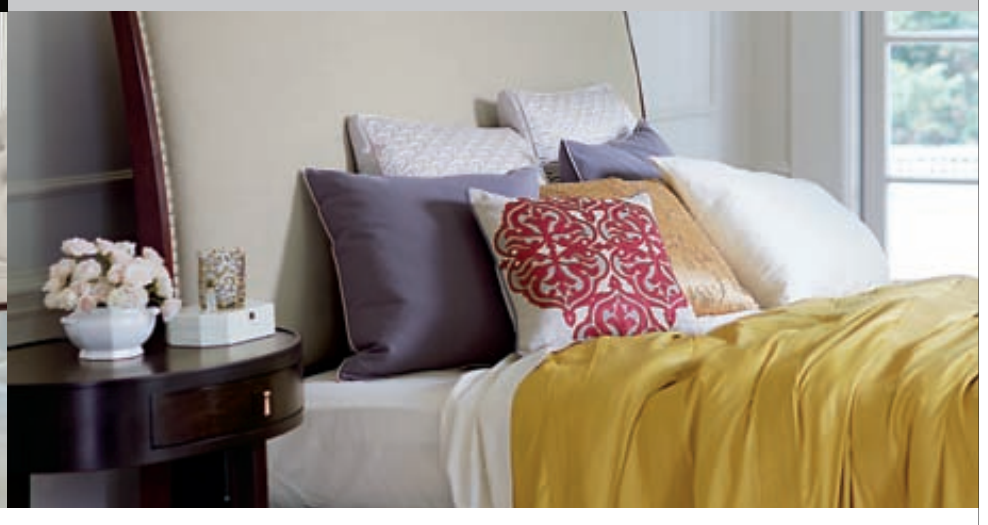

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avenue Design

Fabricville celebrates 45th anniversary

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

Fabricville may not be the only fabric and drapery retailer in Quebec and Eastern Canada but with 24 stores, it is the largest chain in the region.

Furthermore, Fabricville is affiliated with Fabricland. With more than 170 stores coast to coast, consumers benefit from the organization's superior buying power and personalized services.

Established in 1970, Fabricville celebrates its 45th anniversary in 2015 with even more products and services. The spacious stores showcase mammoth collections of diverse fabrics and drapery. Ready-made window coverings and accessories, such as curtains, draperies, a plethora of blinds as well as duvets, bedspreads and related items are available.

Fabricville's sales associates and decor consultants provide in-house one-on-one service. All home decor sales associates receive comprehensive training before serving on the floor. Therefore, customers need not fret about how to cover an odd-shaped window or where to find stunning fabrics to complement a colour scheme or create a focal point. Besides custom-made valences, draperies and an array of blinds, Fabricville carries lamps, mirrors, accent furniture, irons, steamers, sewing machines, notions, sewing accessories, yarns and crafts.

Ricki Carr, vice-president of store operations, notices a resurgence in home sewing, quilting, knitting and crafts. For a while it wasn't as pronounced here as in other provinces, she said, but now it's really caught on. People are taking lessons, joining workshops and entering contests. "We have a huge selection of fabrics and accessories for quilters," Carr said.

"Customers can come in with a swatch, paint chip or magazine photo and our decor consultants will co-ordinate everything to create a look," Carr said. "Here you don't have to settle for a tiny swatch because we have metres of the actual fabric right on the floor and ready to go." Fabricville is also reputed for providing a full range of shop-at-home services. Experienced consultants bring fabrics to the customer's home, and installation is available.

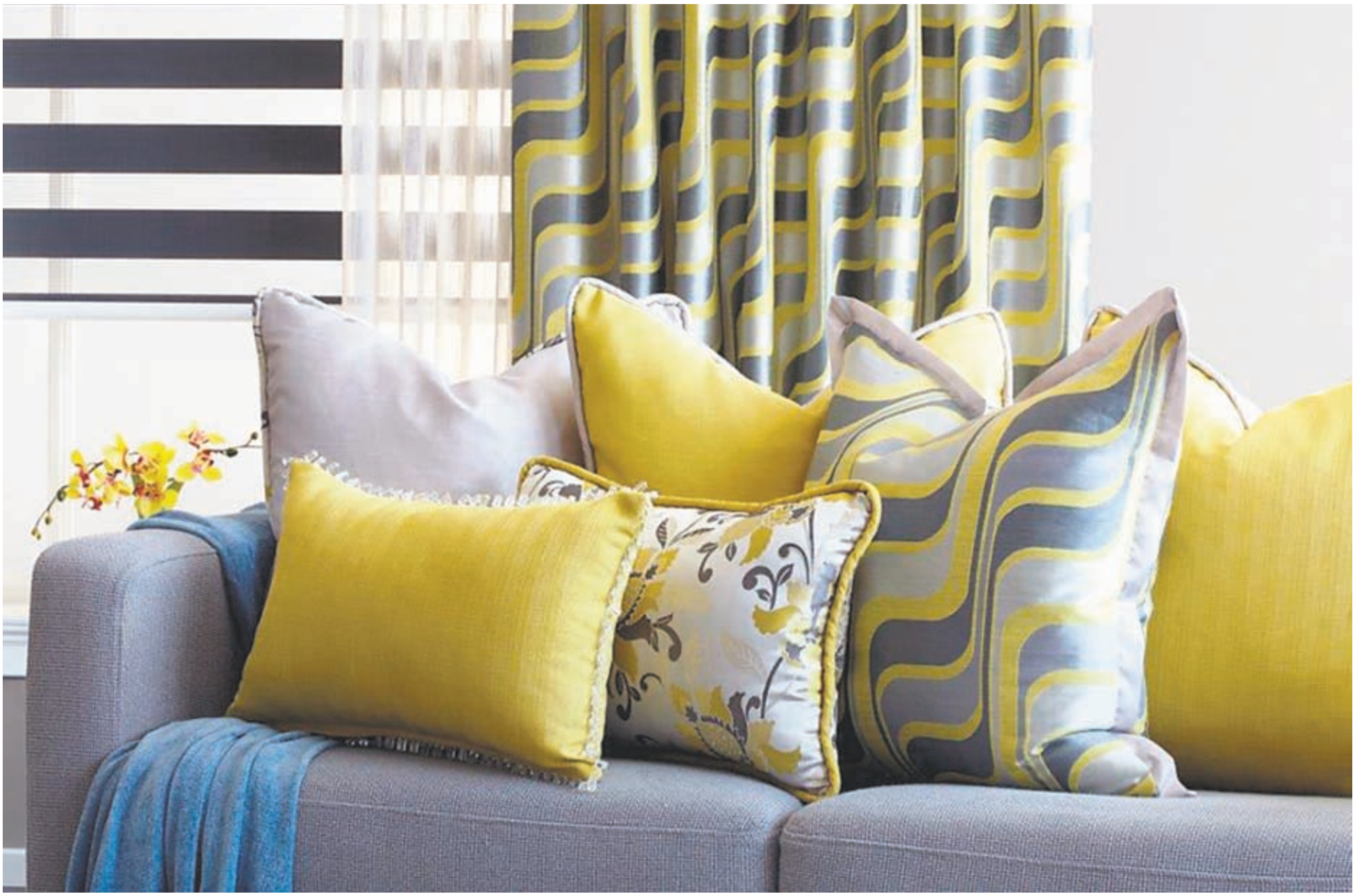
Carr says people often comment on the high-quality fabric and competitive prices. They recall having seen the same calibre fabric elsewhere at a higher price. Fabrics cover the entire spectrum from mid- to high-end. "We also have a lot of clearance sales where customers can pick up fabric at reduced prices."

Fabricville customers include lay consumers as well as interior decorators and couturiers. Sometimes, interior designers come in with their customers. Fabricville's designer program entitles designers to a generous discount on fabrics. All customers get a 20 per cent discount on fabrics if they obtain Club Elite cards.

Fabricville buyers travel all over the world and order directly from the source.

With regard to trends in home decor and drapery, fabric tends to emulate fashion attire, Carr says. "We're seeing lots of florals and bright prints for fall. Translucent blinds are also trendy and sheers are always in vogue."

For free shop-at-home consultation, phone 1-855-5DECOR5 (533-2675). To select a store address and phone number, visit www.fabricville.com. Fabricville has seven locations in the greater Montreal area and the one at 5250 Pare near Decarie is central (514-733-7118). ■



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New location bashert for centre for full-service

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

When Tapis Décor Chantilly owner, Irwin Taiger, relocated this summer to 707 Lucerne Rd., corner Jean Talon, he reflected on the evolution of the multi-faceted, full-service decorating centre, and his good fortune to find a superior venue within proximity to Decarie Boulevard and major arteries of Greater Montreal.

"Don't get me wrong, we were happy at the previous location but tenants were evicted to make way for new plans," Taiger said, referring to the reconfiguration of T.M.R. Shopping Centre. "I'm convinced our prior and recent moves were both beshert, and this one brings us to another level." Free parking is available on the property.

A hands-on owner, Taiger has overseen the professional team's redesign and renovation of the bright new premises. The interior is 2½ times the size of the former boutique, therefore, Tapis Décor Chantilly is able to showcase its extensive collection of carpets, blinds, window treatments, fabrics, floor coverings and accessories.

Correct colour co-ordination is essential in home or office decor, so Taiger made sure to install state-of the-art LED lighting to guarantee precision.

Furthermore, the street level, 3,200-square-foot interior draws natural light through its front windows. Tapis Décor Chantilly caters to end users as well as architects, decorators and designers.

The layout includes an area furnished with a special table and amenities reserved for customers and decorators to pore over fabrics, textures, hues and products.

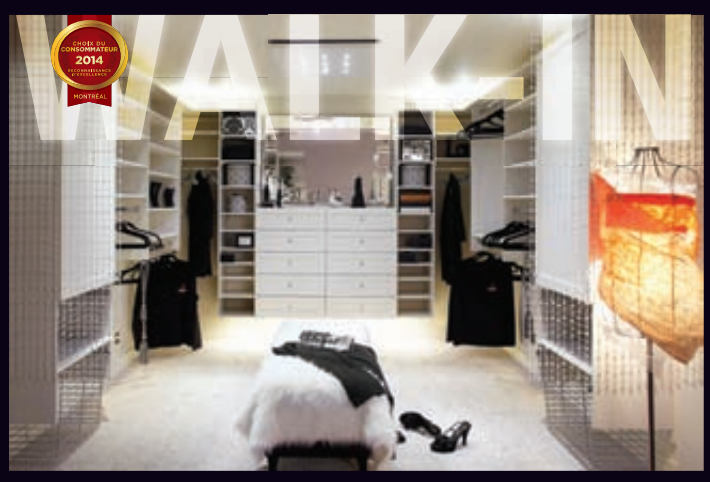
Tapis Décor Chantilly's experienced personnel enjoy their work and like interacting with customers. Executive assistant Heidi Wieferig came on board eight years ago and decorating specialist Martine Thomassin has been with the company for more than a decade.

Wieferig and Thomassin summed up the new venue as "bigger, brighter and better." Taiger has arranged for topnotch craftsmen and installers for blinds, window treatments, upholstery, rugs, flooring and other areas.

To maintain his excellent reputation, Taiger oversees every step of the operation, and that includes installation. Word of mouth is the best advertising, he says,

TAPIS DÉCOR CHANTILLY PHOTOS

Garde Robes GAGNON



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but no matter how pleased people are with products and service, craftsmanship and installation are paramount.

Tapis Décor Chantilly is prepared to work within every client's budget and lifestyle, and fulfil the decorating needs of singles, young couples, growing families, and empty nesters.

"Although we are pleased to provide our shop-at-home service, we prefer people come in because they can actually get the feel of things," Taiger said.

"If they are looking for motorized blinds, they can try them and if it's rugs or fabric, they can test the texture. Our in-house decorating specialist can help them whether it involves arranging for fabrics to co-ordinate window coverings and upholstery or choosing carpets or flooring. In addition to blinds, we handle custom-made draperies, valences, sheers and Roman Shades. We also carry a selection of wall coverings to complete the total decor."

Taiger is proud to be one of the few Hunter Douglas showcase dealers in Quebec.

With more space, the centre is able to display more choices, from wool carpet manufacturers such as Stanton and Couristan, to the latest products from Shaw, Mohawk, Masland, Kane and print carpet from Milliken. The centre also specializes in a vast array of custom and ready-made area rugs and stair runners such as Momeni and Surya.

Tapis Décor Chantilly is currently setting up a designated wood floor section for clients looking to install solid wood, engineered wood or even laminates. For those planning to spruce up kitchens and bathrooms, the centre installs vinyl planks, linoleum, woven vinyl and they even do custom vinyl flooring with inserts.

When Norman Cohen established Tapis Décor Chantilly in 1983, he focused on rugs, says Taiger, who worked with his stepfather and took over when Cohen retired. "Gradually, we diversified and Tapis Décor Chantilly has evolved into a full-service decorating centre."

However, Taiger is eager to assure customers they will always be able to count on Tapis Décor Chantilly's warm welcoming, personalized guidance, good will and competitive pricing. They can also rely on the boutique's continued online presence (www.decorchantilly.com), shop-at-home service, and phone 514-388-6060 for information. ■

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Martin Industries heritage home specialist for windows and doors

Martin Cooper, of Martin Industries, is celebrating 35 years as a leader in the installation of top quality windows and doors in Montreal.
ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN PHOTOS

ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

After 35 years, Martin Cooper of Martin Industries continues to earn the confidence of his customers.

Martin Industries specializes in the installation of windows and doors in existing homes and is firmly established as the premier supplier for heritage homes in Montreal. "Our success is due to our personalized and efficient service and the wide selection of superior products," says Cooper.

Designers, decorators and architects turn to Martin Industries for their client's window and door needs. "We have worked extremely hard over the years to earn our place as the go-to company by the top designers and architects in the city," says Cooper.

His company stays ahead of the curve consistently using the latest and best options both in styling and technology. Energy saving alternatives include Low E, Argon gas and the most advanced weather stripping techniques.

The showroom at Martin Industries features a full range of windows and doors customized to meet home owner's expectations.

The goal of the team of highly trained specialists is to work with the client to choose the best materials, and look to bring out the best in each home.

"In high-end homes we work to match the woodwork, paying careful attention to architectural details," he says.

This expertise has allowed Martin Industries to develop as the leader in this niche market. "Our craftsmanship extends to archways, railings and columns," says Cooper.

The company has taken on the challenge of working with old homes, preserving them well into the future.

Many municipalities, such as Westmount, Outremont and the Plateau, have strict municipal guidelines for replacement windows and doors for heritage homes. "We know the rules and regulations inside and out, and can effectively guide our clients to the appropriate choices when replacing their windows and doors," says Cooper.

The staff is also fully versed in the details of provincial and federal renovation tax credit programs.

The Martin team has the expertise to work with leaded glass often found in older homes. "We will preserve leaded glass and re-install it into new windows," says Cooper. "This is a difficult, challenging process that most suppliers will not undertake."

While definitely a high-end supplier, Cooper says that because of the many choices available in the marketplace, there are windows and doors for every price range. With so many materials to choose from, wood remains a favourite. Wood windows and doors are not only beautiful but act as a great insulator. With proper preservatives, wood is durable and corrosion-resistant.

To complement the look of a home, wood allows many finish options. Clear-coated, painted or stained wood provides limitless decorating possibilities. Many exterior finish types and colours are available as well. "Wood can be matched to create a beautiful flow in your home," says Cooper. "The homeowner must ask himself what he wants to look at when he is sitting in his living room."

Cooper believes in supporting both Quebec and Canadian-based companies, and he works with Lepage Millwork, Lapco, Mirabel and other high-end suppliers. "First and foremost windows and doors made in Canada are top quality and made for our climate," says Cooper. "Many manufacturers are American- based, but we have a superior product made right here in Quebec – I believe in supporting local businesses."

Cooper and his team do not only sell windows and doors, they provide design advice. "We always go to the home [in order] to make the right recommendations," he says.

While many in the industry hire sub-contractors for installation, Cooper has two full-time crews of his own. "Our quality of installation sets us apart," says Cooper. "My installers are professionals and truly a cut above."

Satisfied customers can attest to the professionalism of Cooper's team. They prepare the room, remove their work boots, spread drop sheets, cover the contents of the room and make sure to remove any debris upon completion of the job. "Word-of-mouth testimonials from our clients are our best recommendation," says Cooper.

"When I tell you we'll be there, we will be there and start on time. When we start a job we finish it. We never leave in the middle."

Drop by Martin Industries expansive showroom at 8178 Montview in the Town of Mount Royal industrial park just west of Decarie. Consult the website at www.martinindustries.ca ■

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Building trust when selling your house

ELLEN LECHTER GREEN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Real estate broker Bunny Berke is in the business of people.

"It's all about building relationships," says Berke, who has been a broker for the past 10 years. "I deal with clients myself, no matter the cost of the property or any individual budget. It's important to me that each client feels taken care of."

Berke began her real estate career after years of working as a head hunter and a fundraiser in the Montreal community. Real estate proves to be a good fit as it allows her to continue using her negotiating skills in order to help people buy or sell properties.

Berke will represent any property, be it residential, commercial or revenue throughout the Montreal island. "The best way to ensure a successful real estate transaction is to have someone else negotiate on your behalf," she advises.

"It's difficult to assess your own home properly because most homeowners are too emotionally attached to the property. Often, they believe their home is worth more than the market dictates."

Professional brokers are objective, know the market and should provide realistic expectations to the seller. "I know from personal experience how attached a homeowner can be," she says. "I recently had my own home on the market and my expectations exceeded the reality. The house landed up selling below my original asking price because I was too personally attached to initially assess it objectively."

Bunny Berke

It's that kind of honesty that creates loyal clients and makes Berke a successful broker. "It's vital that you build trust with your clients," she says. "I worked with one family for three years during which a few offers fell through. But they never gave up and neither did I. One day, I... called the client and told her I just found the house she was going to buy. The whole family came to see it and they immediately made an offer."

The house received multiple offers but under Berke's guidance, her clients' offer was the one accepted and they got the house. "These days, it seems that people have lost the concept of loyalty," she says. "So as brokers, we have to work harder to earn it. Ultimately, our clients are not working with a firm but with an individual. When you're there to listen and you're attentive to what your clients want and you're flexible, loyalty should follow."

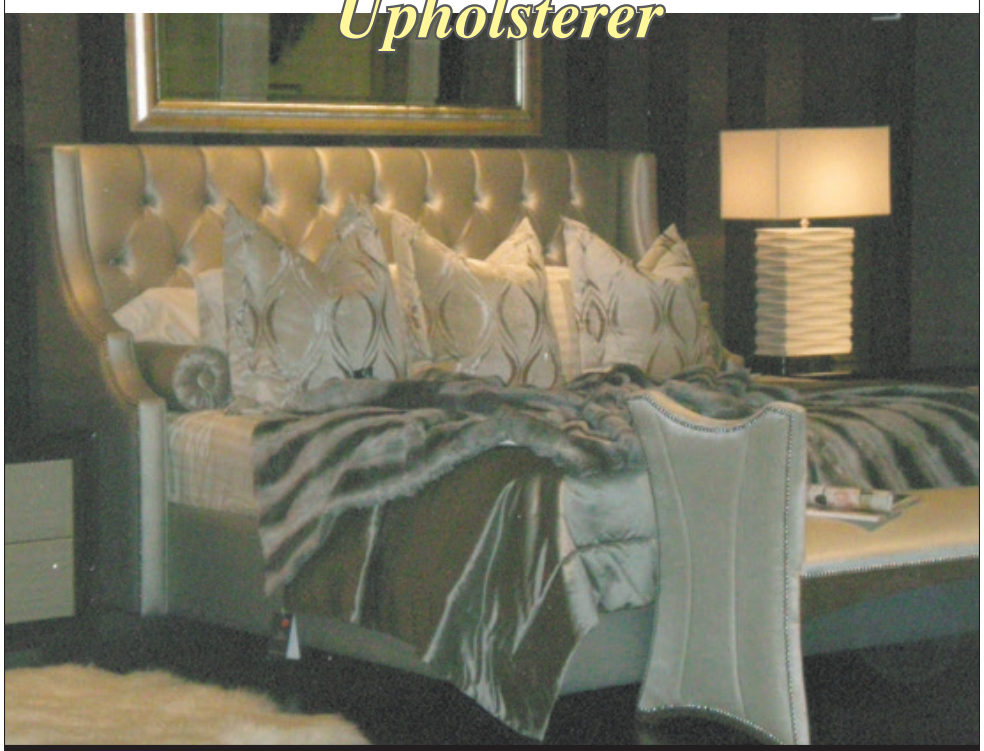
Besides brokering real estate, Berke is an avid horseback rider and skier. She also publishes her own lifestyle magazine called *Canvas*, and continues to fundraise. Her upbeat attitude and involvement in the community continues to help with her profession. "I believe in a well-rounded life," she says. "I try to live my life turning any negative into a positive."

It was a no-brainer when Remax administrative assistant Kimry Gravenor turned to Berke for help while purchasing her home a few years ago. "I needed a broker who was very familiar with the neighbourhood," she says. "I knew I could trust Bunny to find us what we needed, and she did."

Recently, Berke has been working with brokers in Belize and Toronto and hopes to eventually form relationships with brokers in other cities as well. "I actually have a home for sale right now in Belize," she says.

No matter how many projects she has going on, Berke works with every client to ensure their buying or selling experience is both a good one and a success. "A broker isn't a 9-5 job. We're on-call 24 hours a day. We're taxi drivers and hand-holders, as well as the client's biggest support," she says. "I care about each and every client and do everything I can to help them achieve the best results." ■

DAVID ELMALEH
Upholsterer



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A light for everyone

CONTINUED ROM PAGE 2

A full kitchen replete with striking cabinetry, a stainless steel sink and a large granite covered island is used to display overhead and under-cabinet lighting options.

Comfortable, fashion-forward leather sofas serve as a relaxed backdrop in the Lutron Experience Centre where state-of-the-art control systems are featured, including motorized blinds and drapes, temperature and lighting controls, as well as remote thermostat and alarm systems.

Door, cabinetry, bath and closet hardware is available including closet tracking systems. Outdoor lighting is displayed on exposed brick and stucco walls as they would appear on the consumer's home.

The selection of higher end lighting featuring such lines as Schonbek, Swarovski and Luce Plan complement exclusive lines including Lladro, Blackjack and many more. Unique decorative and organizational accessories round out the myriad of offerings available. "We carry many unique and eclectic objets d'art in keeping with our avant-garde styling," says Andrée.

A cash and carry section featuring many discounted and sale items complements the selection at Montreal Lighting and Hardware. "We invite the consumer to consult our website," says Freddie.

"We have almost 80,000 items on the site and over 2,000 items in the store. We challenge the consumer to do his homework and then come and see us."

Montreal Lighting and Hardware is located at 5670 Paré. Business hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.. Monday through Friday. Ample parking is available. ■

Above: sister and brother, Andrée and Freddie Naimer, owners of Montreal Lighting and Hardware. Middle: Lladro Spanish porcelain is featured in a lamp and chandelier collection. Bottom: outdoor lighting is displayed on brick and stucco walls. ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN PHOTOS

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Batimat generates unique solutions to enhance bathrooms and kitchens

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

The experts at Batimat, 4790 Jean Talon, corner Victoria, provide dedicated guidance and follow-up service for every customer seeking the established company's variety of elegant, top quality bathroom and kitchen products.

Established in Montreal during the late '70s, Batimat started off in ceramics but subsequently diversified. Today, Batimat distributes and sells an extensive array of international premier brands to fulfil 21st-century demands for bathroom and/or kitchen construction and renovation projects. Acquired by Hajoca Corporation in 2005, Batimat is part of the third-largest plumbing group in North America.

The multi-faceted Montreal showrooms occupy two floors and are neatly arranged in zones throughout the 14,000-square-foot premises, which also house a warehouse and a garage. The stellar sinks, bathtubs, showers, toilets, faucets, taps, fittings, towel warmers, vessels and accessories embrace a potpourri of classical, traditional, contemporary and modern periods. The sizes, shapes, styles, and configurations are equally diverse. Furthermore, products hail from all over the world.

"We try to create different experiences and present a mixture of impressions here," said Jacques Farmer. Affiliated with Batimat for 15 years, Farmer oversees strategic planning, and serves as technical adviser and trainer. "We do commercial and residential projects but our main focus is residential," he said.

"At Batimat, we have a unique solution for every challenging situation."

Batimat guides customers who come in alone and others who work with architects and designers. "We don't try to do complete home decor but we give suggestions."

Instead of simply browsing through the showrooms, Farmer encourages customers to capitalize on the knowledge and expertise Batimat personnel are eager to share. "Discuss what you are looking for, your budget, and provide a rough sketch and measurements of the area. Then we will guide you through the showrooms and point out possibilities."

Many homes in N.D.G., Westmount and other areas of Montreal were constructed pre-1945, when bathrooms were invariably built on the second storey. To compensate for limited access, home owners converted closets on the main floor into powder rooms. Batimat displays a potpourri of sinks and toilets, such as miniature wall-mounted models with embedded plumbing that maximizes restricted space allocations.

> *Good quality designs don't die so fast and they always look fresh. That's why we choose to associate with the best brands.*

In another zone, Batimat showcases modern hands-free faucets that turn on and off, as well as reclaimed marble blocks and cast bronze sinks. Companies have introduced electronic devices to operate sinks and bathrooms. Baths take up lots of space, so Batimat has arranged tubs in different areas on each floor.

Crushed stone, synthetic resin, enamel, steel, cast iron, acrylic, bronze and wood are some of the materials manufacturers feature for kitchen and bathroom sinks, and baths that come in oval, round and other shapes and sizes.

Kitchens also take priority at Batimat where sinks, faucets and plumbing components are sleek and stylish essentials. "For kitchen faucets certain brands stand out because they were the first to do stainless steel faucets that do not age," Farmer says. Some clients seek copper, gold, or bronze.

"Good quality designs don't die so fast and they always look fresh. That's why we choose to associate with the best brands. Whims and trends don't last."

For kitchens, Farmer suggests customers attend to their cabinets and other components first. Once they get a feel for the concept, Batimat will help them complement it.

Conversely, for bathrooms, it's crucial to begin with Batimat to prevent potential problems. Batimat advises clients on key bath/shower room elements such as toilets, tubs, baths with massages, showers, faucets and plumbing. Batimat can give shape to the project.

ELAINE COHEN PHOTO

"We work with contractors in Montreal and we are accustomed to counselling and co-ordinating information to facilitate the job," Farmer says. "We do not staff our own contractors or do the actual installation because we are open to everyone. Otherwise, we would be in competition with designers and that would defeat our purpose."

Batimat prices are competitive and cost effective. "Many of our products are high-end but we also have a surprising selection in the mid-price range. We specialize in branded collections. If it's something rated as good quality in any country in the world, chances are we have it at Batimat. If not, we'll look into it and get it. Though the warranty is from the manufacturer, we see that it's acted on quickly."

A Batimat treasure not to be missed is a bronze bath tub that captivates the eye like a precious sculpture. The bottom is smooth and shiny. Therefore, the casting process differs from other bronze pieces. According to Farmer, the properties are good for the skin and he is aware of a spa in Texas that purchased two of these icons. Until the year 2000 only a handful existed. ■

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The Canadian Jewish News

Galerie M – Montreal's home décor consignment shop

Marcy Katz, owner of Galerie M,, Montreal's premier consignment shop for high-end furniture and accessories, is passionate about providing luxury merchandise at exceptional prices.

Unique items for the home including table décor are featured at consignment prices. PHOTOS ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN

ANITA SZABADI-GOTTESMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Marcy Katz, owner of Galerie M, is passionate about her unique gallery featuring consignment furniture and home accessories.

"I love the idea that people can have beautiful pieces for their homes at reasonable prices," says Katz.

The word is out as Galerie M is set to celebrate its five-year anniversary as a leading purveyer of affordable luxury items in Montreal. Galerie M's distinguished client list extends to Quebec City, the Laurentians, Ottawa and beyond.

The 5,000-square-foot showroom is conveniently located in Montreal's Quartier Du Design Royalmount, designers' alley, on Devonshire in Town of Mount Royal's industrial park just west of Decarie Boulevard. The hunt is on as discerning clients scan the showroom floor, walls and ceilings chock-a-block with high-quality furniture and accessories on consignment.

The merchandise originates from some of Montreal's finest homes and exclusive showrooms, as well as ends of lines, overstock and brand new luxury merchandise all at exceptional prices. A hang-tag on every item gives as much information as possible about the item's origins and current retail price, if available.

Galerie M has established itself as a premier consignment gallery of pre-owned, designer and supplier samples, closeouts and estate home furnishing and accoutrements, making style and quality more accessible.

The concept is simple. Clients bring in home furnishings and decorative accessories to sell on their behalf. The merchandise is not owned by Galerie M, and consignors are paid when their goods sell.

"Retail is my passion," says Katz. "I thought the consignment concept was very smart."

Client and Galerie M set the price together, taking into account condition, style, demand for the item, manufacturer reputation and original price. "Each consignment is a partnership making sure your items are priced at fair market value to realistically sell in 30 days," she says Katz. "Periodic mark downs are made to ensure goods sell in a timely manner."

The merchandise remains the client's until it is sold. A typical contract runs for three months with prices reduced by 10 per cent every three weeks.

Katz says that most items are sold within the first three weeks. Decorators and clients alike know that when they see a piece that is of interest to them, it is the time to buy. "If you wait too long it may be gone," says Katz. "Our pieces are priced well and fairly, and will typically sell quickly."

The furnishings showcased at Galerie M are of the highest quality and have been carefully edited by Katz. "We look for high-quality items from antiques and traditional pieces through to modern," says Katz.

"We choose items that we feel people may want in their homes today."

Some of the exclusive top-quality manufacturers are luxury brands from the Baker, Grange, Roche Bobois and Ligne Rosset collections.

The collection at Gallerie M extends to mirrors, chandeliers, table and floor lamps, bathroom vanities, rugs, fine art, lithographs and prints. Tableware from the collections of Royal Doulton, Waterford, Baccarat, Val St Lambert and Christofle, among others, are featured. Items are not simply placed on the loft-like showroom floor but merchandised together with other pieces, creating vignettes highlighting how particular articles will look in a client's home.

Galerie M features an online showroom that is easy to navigate and is updated daily. "We photograph every item and remove items as soon as they are sold," says Katz.

She will consult with the client at their home to walk them through the consignment process. "Choosing to let items from your home go can be a very emotional process," she says. "I show my clients that their treasured items will be showcased and often repurposed and appreciated by someone else." ■

Visit Galerie M at 8160 Devonshire, Mont Royal, or consult the website at www.galeriem.ca

> *I love the idea that people can have beautiful pieces for their homes at reasonable prices.*

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Tapis Nouraie is a prime source for carpets

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

After a visit to Tapis Nouraie, 8164 chemin Devonshire, Ville Mont-Royal, it is easy to understand why founding owner Iraj Nouraie and manager Charbel Irani would like people to arrange an appointment.

There is an engaging story behind the artistry associated with each carpet, and Noraie and Irani are pleased to provide an informative presentation.

Located in spacious quarters with parking at the door, Tapis Nouraie features a treasure trove of genuine, hand-knotted Persian carpets. In addition, consumers will discover an array of stunning carpets from Afghanistan, Pakistan, as well as an antique collection.

The principals at Tapis Noraie are well-versed in the history and cultural background associated with every carpet. They share their knowledge with customers, who may come in alone or with an interior decorator. They sell, deliver, place and offer after-sales service.

The upscale hand-knotted wool carpets come in varied colours, designs and patterns. The size range is extensive. "A carpet may be labelled handmade but that doesn't mean it's hand-knotted like the carpets at Tapis Nouraie," Irani said.

Nouraie and researcher James Turner co-authored *The Persian Carpet, The Vision of a Whole People,* a book that delves into the history and cultural significance of hand-woven Persian, Afghanistan and Pakistan carpets. The hard-covered tome is embellished with colourful photos and enlightening facts. The authors point out three distinctive categories of Persian rug production – tribal, village and town.

In the past, many nomadic tribal groups in Iran followed their sheep between winter and summer grazing lands. The women worked on the rugs in the winter camps. They enriched their creations with vibrant colours, geometrical designs and traditional patterns. The village carpets reflect their creators more settled workplaces in homes and shops. Knotting was finer.

As for the town carpets, the knotting is even more intricate. The floral designs, weaving and dyeing are also more sophisticated. The authors believe the art of Persian carpets reached its zenith in the 20th century. Production emanated from the ancient cities Isfahan, Nain and Tabriz in Iran. Tapis Nouraie showcases some high-calibre museum-quality antique carpets.

Tradition is evident in the artistry and production of Persian carpets. The creations from Afghanistan and Pakistan are more recent, therefore, the designs are more modern. The artist has more leeway and isn't bound by tradition.

Nouraie has been an entrepreneur in Montreal for more than 35 years. Hence, many longtime residents remember Tapis Nouraie from Place Bonaventure. Subsequently, Tapis Noraie occupied premises in Westmount and on the fifth floor of Ogilvy's on Ste. Catherine Street. Two years ago, Nouraie consolidated his entire operation under one roof on Devonshire.

"Now we're serving many of our older customers' children," says Irani. "Some of our customers also order our rugs to be shipped to their winter homes in Florida. People come to us from all over Canada. The rugs are durable and an investment, whether someone is starting out in an apartment or residing in a luxurious home." ■

Tabriz Shaykh Safi design
TAPIS NOURAIE PHOTO

For information, call Tapis Nouraie at 514-879-9176 or email nouraie@tapisnouraie.com or visit www.tapisnouraie.com.

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